

N E W S R E L E A S E

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FIFTY NINE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES PARTICIPATE IN STATEWIDE LEADERSHIP FORUM

SACRAMENTO – Fifty nine extraordinary high school students from throughout California gathered today on the North Steps of the State Capitol as part of an innovative five-day forum designed to assist young people with disabilities to reach their full potential. Each student was selected to attend the Forum based on individual achievements and leadership qualities.

“This year’s Youth Leadership Forum is especially significant because it coincides with the 16th anniversary of the implementation of the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act,” said Patrick Henning, director of the state Employment Development Department (EDD). “Every one of these students has unique talents and skills that they can use to reach their career goals and to benefit society. We are proud that this unique forum will assist these delegates in continuing their development as strong community leaders.”

The delegates began the morning with a group rally and photograph, followed by a meeting in the Governor’s Council Room with administration and state agency representatives. The students then received a guided tour of the Capitol and visited individual Legislator’s offices.

“The Youth Leadership Forum is an event that can be life changing for participants,” said Catherine Campisi, director of the state Department of Rehabilitation. “It seeks to give them a positive identity as a person with a disability and connects them with adult role models and resources to assist them in transitioning from high school to work and independent living.”

Celebrating its 15th anniversary, the annual Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) for Students with Disabilities is sponsored by the Governor’s Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, in coordination with EDD and other state entities, including the Department of Rehabilitation, Department of Education, California Workforce Investment Board, California State Council on Developmental Disabilities, State Independent Living Council, Institute on Human Services at Sonoma State University, and California Foundation for Independent Living Centers, with financial support from Wells Fargo Foundation and Lockheed Martin Corporation.

(more)

California created the YLF concept in 1991 and was the first state to hold a YLF conference. Since then more than 33 states and Puerto Rico have followed California's lead. The primary purpose of the Forum is to prepare students with disabilities to reach their career goals, join the workforce, live independently, become involved in their communities, and continue their successes by learning from adults with disabilities who excel in their personal and professional lives.

So far during the Forum, student delegates have participated in leadership development programs, attended various sessions and panel discussions, attended demonstrations in the latest technology and assistive devices, interactively learned about each other's disabilities, and received presentations and advice from motivational speakers and mentors.

EDITOR'S NOTE: A list of the 59 YLF participants, listed by county of residence, follows:

Alameda County

<u>NAME</u>	<u>CITY</u>	<u>HIGH SCHOOL</u>
Talia Geliebter	Kensington	Albany High School

Contra Costa County

<u>NAME</u>	<u>CITY</u>	<u>HIGH SCHOOL</u>
Kiara Hedglin	Concord	College Park High School
Kenneth Hoitt	San Ramon	California High School
Kelso Igano	Pittsburgh	Pittsburg High School
Sarah Marks	Moraga	Campolindo High School
Christina Remson	Brentwood	Liberty High School
Adam Wilson	Lafayette	Acalanes High School

El Dorado County

<u>NAME</u>	<u>CITY</u>	<u>HIGH SCHOOL</u>
Amber Kaslar	Diamond Springs	Union Mine High School

Fresno County

<u>NAME</u>	<u>CITY</u>	<u>HIGH SCHOOL</u>
Marissa Barfield	Fresno	Clovis West High School
David Harper	Fresno	Clovis West High School
Joshua Swartzel	Clovis	Clovis East High School

Glenn County

<u>NAME</u>	<u>CITY</u>	<u>HIGH SCHOOL</u>
David Billingsley	Orland	Hamilton Union High School

Humboldt County

<u>NAME</u>	<u>CITY</u>	<u>HIGH SCHOOL</u>
Sarah Dutton	Shelter Cove	Whale Gulch School

(more)

Kern County**NAME**

Candice Goodie
Kendra Howe
Adam Ledezma

CITY

Bakersfield
Edwards
Delano

HIGH SCHOOL

Highland High School
Desert High School
Delano High School

Lake County**NAME**

Eric Clow

CITY

Kelseyville

HIGH SCHOOL

Middletown High School

Los Angeles County**NAME**

Joshua Acevedo
Henry Armstrong, IV
Heather Bandy
Rebecca Benton
Marissa Castro
Reggie Dunn
Danielle Friedman
William Herrera
Annael Lima
Philip Murray
Jeremy Olmeda
Vanessa Vargas
Antony White

CITY

La Puente
Canyon Country
Winnetka
West Covina
La Puente
Marina Del Rey
Saugus
La Puente
Lancaster
Pasadena
Lancaster
Northridge
Compton

HIGH SCHOOL

Bassett High School
Canyon High School
Reseda Science Magnet School
Nogales High School
Bassett High School
Venice High School
Saugus High School
Bassett High School
Lancaster High School
Pasadena High School
Quartz Hill High School
James Monroe High School
Eko Multipurpose Center

Merced County**NAME**

Edward Pruneda

CITY

Merced

HIGH SCHOOL

Buhach Colony High School

Monterey County**NAME**

James Decker
Ellen Sweigert

CITY

Monterey
Pacific Grove

HIGH SCHOOL

Monterey High School
Pacific Grove High School

Napa County**NAME**

Helena Corro
Jose Renteria

CITY

American Canyon
Napa

HIGH SCHOOL

St. Helen High School
Vintage High School

Orange County**NAME**

Scott Ross
Claire Stanley

CITY

Garden Grove
Mission Viejo

HIGH SCHOOL

Bolsa Grande High School
Mission Viejo High School

Riverside County**NAME**

Danielle Johnson
Andrew Tjelmeland

CITY

Riverside
Riverside

HIGH SCHOOL

Martin Luther King, Jr. High School
Jurupa Valley High School

(more)

Sacramento County**NAME**

Raul Barajas
Kendra Cole
Samuel Davidson
Laura Hale
Alex Mentkowski
DiMario Strong-Baker

CITY

Elk Grove
Sacramento
Fair Oaks
Elk Grove
Sacramento
Sacramento

HIGH SCHOOL

Elk Grove High School
Del Campo High School
San Juan High School
Elk Grove High School
Jesuit High School
Inderkum High School

San Bernardino County**NAME**

Michael Gladwell
M.E. Wilson
Mindy Wood

CITY

Lake Arrowhead
Twentynine Palms
Crestline

HIGH SCHOOL

Rim of the World High School
Twentynine Palms High School
Rim of the World High School

San Diego County**NAME**

Rita Benavidez
Erika Bischoff
Annie Parr
Jacquelyne Yawn

CITY

Chula Vista
Bonsall
El Cajon
Santee

HIGH SCHOOL

Otay Ranch High School
Fallbrook Union High School
Grossmont High School
West Hills High School

San Francisco County**NAME**

Mary Beltran

CITY

San Francisco

HIGH SCHOOL

George Washington High School

San Joaquin County**NAME**

Evan Gong
Samantha Poteet

CITY

Tracy
Lockeford

HIGH SCHOOL

Millennium High School
Tokay High School

San Mateo County**NAME**

Mila Wright

CITY

Redwood City

HIGH SCHOOL

Carlmont High School

Santa Cruz County**NAME**

Oliver Indarose

CITY

Watsonville

HIGH SCHOOL

Anzar High School

Sonoma County**NAME**

Julie Reibel

CITY

Sebastopol

HIGH SCHOOL

Analy High School

Yuba County**NAME**

Shaza'kia Poe-Lyde

CITY

Marysville

HIGH SCHOOL

Wheatland High School

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